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## Washington: The Hole in the White House Cellar

By JAMES RESTON

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President Johnson, in addition to his other chores, now has to fill a hole in the basement of the White House. McGeorge Bundy, the White House assistant on national security affairs, is leaving his brilliant dungeon under the President's office to run the Ford Foundation, and what Mr. Johnson does about this hole will be very interesting.

Mr. Bundy's job was to take the daily torrent of information from the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department and the Defense Department and channel it to the President; to study, sift and summarize the top-secret papers, and do so without overburdening the President or losing the confidence of the Cabinet officers who out-ranked him.

### Bundy's Triumph

Replacing him will not be easy. To work for Lyndon Johnson, a man should not be Mac Bundy's age. He should either be young enough to fail and start all over again somewhere else, or old and relaxed enough to tell the truth and not care what happens. Of the two, the latter is probably what is needed as a replacement now.

The White House inner circle is changing. John McCone has gone as head of the Central Intelligence Agency and has been replaced by Admiral Raborn, who has been a disappointment both to the White House and

the Congressional committee that supervises his activities. Under Secretary of State George Ball, who has been the most patient, persistent and outspoken advocate of restraint in Vietnam, is likely to be leaving soon, and when President Johnson praised Secretary Rusk the other day as the greatest Secretary of State of the century, it almost seemed possible that Mr. Rusk was on his way.

### A Fresh Mind Needed

This is not likely to happen, but the need for a fresh, experienced mind in this small but critical group of Presidential foreign policy advisers is fairly obvious. All of them now on the premises are riveted on Vietnam and almost oblivious to the rest of the world. McNamara and Rusk have gone through a lot together, and have naturally acquired great respect and even affection for one another in the process, but they are both tired, increasingly defensive of past policies, and just on the threshold of another long battle with a critical Congress.

The one thing that might have been expected from Secretaries Rusk and McNamara on Vietnam was a little modesty about their policies, for they have a great deal to be modest about, but they have been reacting to criticism this week as if they had somehow been right all along, and this is a bad sign.

In this situation, it is scarcely surprising that Washington is curious about Bundy's re-

placement. Many names have been mentioned for the job: Bill Moyers, the White House press secretary, William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Paul Nitze, the Secretary of the Navy, and Robert Comer, who is McGeorge Bundy's deputy.

Of these, only Moyers is personally close to the President. He did not want to do the press secretary's job and was persuaded to do so only on the promise that he could be relieved after six months. When the time was up, he could have taken over the Peace Corps, but was by then so valuable to the President and the White House that he agreed to stay on.

His disadvantage in the Bundy job is his limited experience in the field of security affairs. He has been brought into National Security Council matters increasingly in the last nine months, but he has never served abroad and the State Department is even more of a mystery to him than to the President.

Secretary McNamara was asked the other day about reports that he would go to the White House as a sort of Chief of Staff to the President and turn the Pentagon over to his deputy, Cy Vance. His reply to that was that Mr. Vance could handle the Pentagon, which was a justified compliment, but that he knew nothing about the other part of the question.

The job of funneling the papers to the President is not so difficult to fill, but the task

of finding a new security affairs adviser who has the complete confidence of the President and brings new patterns of thought to the task is hard.

David Bruce, the present American Ambassador in London, could undoubtedly do the job. He has the confidence of the President. He is calm and experienced and he has lived with adversity just long enough to know that Vietnam is not the end, or even the center, of the world.

The need at the moment is for a sense of proportion about Vietnam and, what is even harder to achieve, a sense of humor. Saigon has been allowed to loom larger than the whole Pacific. It has overwhelmed policy in the Atlantic and the hemisphere and somebody has to get it back into perspective.

### Others Could Help

Other men, of course, could help the President in what promises to be an agonizing year. Ellsworth Bunker has made his way through the politics of the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Italy and India, which should equip him for the White House, and he also has the qualities of scope and grace.

The easy thing is for the President to turn Bundy's basement office into a post office with an efficient staff that would organize the papers and cut down on Bundy's light bill, but a wise owl among all the hawks and doves would certainly help.